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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses mimesis, the direct representation and total imitation of an event. It studies the co-occurrence of quotative verbs with mimetic enactment based on two corpora of U.S. American English, both available through the University of Pennsylvania Data Consortium. The Switchboard Corpus has 542 speakers ranging in age from 20-60 years and sociolinguistically tagged by educational level and provenance from one of seven main dialect areas within the United States. The Santa Barbara Corpus of spoken English has 52 speakers, ranging in age from 17-70 years, coded by educational level and home state. Overall, the corpus includes tape recordings from 1988-95. Results indicate that the new quotatives are primarily used to enquote mimetic enactment. "Think," hitherto the primary item for the enquoting of inner monologue, is not used much for mimetic enactment. The paper shows that "be like" and "go" are synchronically used as quotative items for mimetic performances in contrast to the older quotative devices such as "say" and "think." It suggests that their non-commitment to the realization of the quoted speech/thought makes them good introductory items for mimesis. The paper asserts that it is due to their newcomer and still marked status that speakers prefer the new quotatives as introductory items for more expressive quotes. (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

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Isabelle Buchstaller (TAAL)

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Abstract

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THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF QUOTATIVES WITH MIMETIC PERFORMANCES

Isabelle Buchstaller (TAAL)

Abstract

This article undertakes a study of the co-occurrence of different verbs of quotation with mimesis. Drawing from a corpus of spoken American English, it shows that the new quotatives[1] are primarily used to enquote mimetic enactment. Think, *hitherto the primary item for the enquoting of inner monologue, is not used much for mimetic enactment. It will be shown that it is* be like *and* go*'s non-commitment to the realization of the quoted speech/thought that makes them good introductory items for mimesis. Furthermore, it will be argued that it is due to their newcomer and still marked status that speakers prefer the new quotatives as introductory items for more expressive quotes.*

1. Introduction

The notion of mimesis can be traced back to Plato (Book III of the *Republic*). It has been taken up by Goffman (1981), Wierzbicka (1974) in her 'quotations as performance' approach, and more recently by Clark and Gerrig (1990). In this approach, quotes are regarded as demonstrations; quoting is 'playing someone's part'. The enquoting person 'does not say what the content of the quote is (i.e. what was said), instead he does something that enables the hearer to SEE for himself what it is, that is to say, in a way, he *shows* this content' (Clark and Gerrig 1990:802). The literature lists several reasons for the incorporation of mimetic performances: to convey a more emotion-based rather than factual rendering in order to reveal how the speakers felt in and perceived the situation; to add more vividness, which is supposed to lead to audience involvement (Blyth 1991); and to superimpose internal evaluation without having to step outside the quotation frame (Labov 1972).

Mimesis is understood as direct representation, the total imitation of the event. In contrast, diegesis is summarized representation, a mere synthesis of the original event. The extremes of these modes can be illustrated by a rendering of an original event where we hear only the reportee's voice, or – conversely – are given a report of the event through the reporter's voice[2]. Consequently, the difference between mimesis and diegesis is between showing and describing, dramatic and descriptive, between reporting the 'how' and the 'what' of the original speech event.

But even though the claim holds in theory that these modes of representation are to be fundamentally kept apart, in everyday talk-in-interaction the boundaries between them are fluid and creatively exploited by speakers. Pure direct reported discourse is a hybrid form of rendering past speech events as direct speech and can incorporate 'delivery aspects' (Clark and Gerrig 1990), such as voice effects, gestures, inarticulate sounds etc. or even consist

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entirely of them. The two modes of quoting can thus be considered as two scalar perspectives on a continuum[3] (Yule 1993:236, Güldemann 2001).

2. Data

This paper discusses the co-occurrence of quotative verbs with mimetic enactment based on 2 corpora of US American English, both available through the University of Pennsylvania Data Consortium. The Switchboard Corpus has a speaker number of 542 ranging from age 20 to age 60; the speakers were sociolinguistically tagged with respect to educational level and provenance from one of 7 main dialect areas within the US. The Santa Barbara Corpus of spoken English has a speaker number of 52, age 17 to 70, coded with respect to educational level and home state. Overall, the corpus includes tape recordings from 1988 to 1995.

As mimesis, the display of 'what has been done before', is synergic and can involve auditory, gestural, and facial activity, all aspects of mimetic enactment to be revealed on an auditive or contextual basis[4] were counted. Thus, for the purposes of the study, coding as [+mimesis] implies the occurrence of voice and/or sound effects of all sorts, and gesture, where it could be retrieved from audience reactions.

3. Findings

The following table gives an overview of the co-occurrence of mimesis with the most important verbs of quotation in US American English.

Table 1: Co-occurrence of quotatives with mimesis[5]

mimesis	%	Number
go	76	132
like	69	159
say	42	50
think	20	21

χ^2 (df 3): 110.634, $p<0.001$

Table 1 yields the following conclusions: Firstly, the χ^2 statistic shows that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the occurrences of mimesis with quotative verbs but not where exactly this significant difference lies. For further discussion and ANOVA results, consider Table 3, below.

The verb *go* is most frequently used to enquote mimetic enactment (76%) (Butters 1980, Schourup 1982a, Tannen 1986, Yule and Mathis 1992). But *be like* is used almost as often for the enquoting of mimetic performances (69%). Only 42% of the tokens of the most frequent dialogue introducer, *say*, co-occur with mimetic performances.

Think co-occurs even less with mimesis. This is quite surprising in view of the fact that *think* enquotes inner monologue, opinion, attitude, and point-of-view. Chafe (1994) and Goffman (1981) have shown that such inner speech is often high in emotion, and therefore more likely to be rendered in vivid, emotionally heightened speech. My data suggests, though, that when hypothetical speech is enquoted by *think*, it is not often accompanied by mimetic effects. Why are such quotes not rendered via re-enactment, mimesis?

4. Discussion

At this point, I would like to introduce two indices, which I will use throughout this paper: I define S_0 as the point in time of the initial mental/verbal activity and S_1 as the interactive rendering of the speech act/thought between the interlocutors. Thus, when speaker A tells his brother at S_0, Christmas Day, *I forgot to buy you a present*, this speech act can be rendered at any given S_1, say, when A is chatting to his buddy B on New Year's Eve, as *I said "I forgot to buy you a present"*.

Conversely, if speaker A thought at S_0, *damn, I forgot to buy him a present*, this can be rendered at S_1 as *I thought "damn, I forgot to buy him a present"*.

From the above it should become clear that the difference between reported inner monologue (henceforth hypothetical reported speech) and reported real occurring speech is their (non-) wording in S_0. Real occurring reported speech has been realized in S_0. Hypothetical reported speech might or might not have been realized in S_0 – A might have mumbled *damn*... or even screamed it inwardly with anger. But both - hypothetical as well as real occurring reported speech - are uttered aloud in S_1, the actual quote.

Let us now consider the co-occurrence of quotatives with real and hypothetical speech events:

Table 2: Distribution of degrees of hypotheticality (in %) per all quotatives[6]

	real	hypothetical
say	52	7
go	45	17
like	22	28
think	0	51

χ^2 (df 15): 223.063, $p < 0.001$

First, I will only discuss the findings for *think*. I will return to the full results below. 51% of all quotes with *think* enquote hypothetical reported speech. Note that *think* does not co-occur with real occurring speech acts.

Thus, my data show that quotes framed with *think* have - in all likelihood - not been uttered out loud in S_0 but are a rendering of what was going on in the mind of the reportee, as is illustrated in Example 1 (cf. also Buchstaller, in preparation).

Example 1 Participating in an experiment

B: oh okay right I work for TI so
we saw it on the uh the T[V]- news one day
and I **thought** "*wow* that might be *interesting*"
A: yeah
yeah we sort of different
B: yeah

Here, *wow that might be interesting* is speaker B's attitude at the point in time (S_0) he saw the news and heard about the call-in experiment. Speaking to A in S_1, B represents his point of view at S_0 as a quote framed by *I thought*. What was going on in his mind at the time, the fact that he found the idea interesting, is rendered via a conventional sound for positive amazement, *wow*.

When evaluation, point-of-view, and attitude are enquoted, they are often rendered as mimetic enactment (consider also sounds such as *ahhh!, gosh* as in Example 3, or *blimey*). Such, often conventionalised, sounds, voice qualities, or gestures have concentrated semantic reference – any attempt to render them in words would be lengthy and necessarily imprecise. The speaker's opinion is rendered via mimesis, which constitutes a short, concise representation of her mental state at that point. Consequently, inner, hypothetical speech is often clad in a more expressive form than just words. Consider the next 2 examples:

Example 2 Being offered Indian sweets

A: she had brought Indian sweets into the office
and it was really funny because they were made from yogurt and carrots
B: urg
→ A: yeah that was a sweet and **I was like** '*u::rgh*' ha ha [ha ha
B: [o ha ha ha ha
A: 'this is a sweet ?
Oh it is
it's a candy'
→ **I'm like** '*urgh*' you know 'Indian candy is not very good'
B: right
A: but everything was and everything
you didn't notice at first but everything was sort of hot

In the above transcript, speaker A describes his disgust at the sweets he was offered by an officemate. The turns marked by the arrows contain sounds expressing his attitude towards the candy, *urgh*. Face considerations would have forbidden the blunt rendering of his negative evaluation: it is pragmatically unlikely that speaker A outwardly uttered *urgh* to his colleague. If we assume that he probably did not, the quotes marked by an arrow feature hypothetical speech – attitude, evaluation at the moment of S_0, rendered as a mimetic quote at S_1. But nothing in the context makes clear whether the content of the quotes was actually spoken aloud or not – whether this quote is inner monologue or interactively realized speech. Consider also Example 3.

Example 3 A family reunion where more and more relatives show up

A: no it was all in the San Antonio Area
B: well sometimes
A: but it kept growing and growing and growing and growing
→ and **we're going** '*oh my gosh*'
so
B: well you have you have the families lives close together
to see each other often
A: uh huh basically

Here again, attitude is rendered as quoted sound – mimetic enactment. Speaker A re-enacts the shock she felt at S_0 via a sound with conventional value, *gosh*.

This phenomenon, the expression of inner states via sounds, is reminiscent of Goffman's (1981:114) 'response cries', whose purpose he defines as 'to show or index the mental states of their transmitters' and to 'clarify the drama of their circumstances'. Goffman also makes clear that it is not their occurrence or non-occurrence that matters but the fact that they are closely tied to the inner states at the moment that they occur. Especially when no interlocutor

is present, it is impossible to tell whether the words/sounds were uttered or merely inward - and even less whether they were heard or not.

The difference between hypothetical reported speech and response cries is merely in timing, for Goffman's response cries co-occurring with the mental states they are supposed to index. Hypothetical quotes have exactly the same function, but are temporally removed from the emotions they are indexing. There is a temporal lapse between the moment of the mental state, S_0, and the indexing in S_1.

Also, hypothetical quotes need not assume the same form as response cries. As the S_0 and S_1 are removed in time, the reporters - freed of the immediacy of their emotions - can attempt to put into words the emotions felt in S_0.

This can be seen in Example 2, where *urgh* co-occurs with *Indian candy is not very good.* Thus, when re-enacting previous mental states, speakers are free to choose to render them as purely mimetic, as sound and speech as in Example 2 (*urgh Indian candy is not very good*), or even without any mimetic enactment.

Notice that the in last two examples, the quotes featuring hypothetical speech expressed in 'response cries' are enquoted by *be like* and *go*. Indeed, Table 1 shows that it is not often *think* that is used as an introductory item for mimesis, it is rather *go* or *be like* that enquote such re-enactment.

It is now time to come back to our original question. Why does *think* not function in line with the overall finding that inner monologue is often cast in mimetic re-enactment when rendered interactively as a quote? Why then is hypothetical reported speech framed by *think* not rendered via mimesis?

I propose the following explanation: *Think* spells out that the speech act is inward, not uttered aloud, not interactively realized. In contrast, quotatives such as *be like* and *go* leave the question of the speech event's production in S_0 entirely open.

If we go back to Table 2, we see that, as expected, *say* is used most frequently with the real occurring speech.

Say spells out that the quote was actually physically uttered aloud[7]. The next most frequent quotative to be employed with real occurring speech is *go*, then *be like*, then *think*.

Thus, when it comes to the enquoting of hypothetical speech, *go* and *like* are in the middle field[8]. They can be used for reporting real occurring speech as well as for hypothetical speech, 'verbally uncommitted thought' (Chafe 1994:245). They thus function as a hedge as they do not commit the speaker to the actual occurrence of the speech act in the way *say* does, and so differ from *think*, which usually refers to inner monologue (attitudes, opinions etc.) and is <u>not</u> used for actually occurring speech. They do not commit themselves to lower epistemic spheres either.

My claim is that speakers using *go* and *like* play with this indeterminacy between speech and thought. The new quotatives operate in the grey area between real occurring and hypothetical reported speech, both of which they can introduce (*be like* 45 % and 17%, *go* 22% and 28% respectively). Speakers creatively exploit this fact. Using the new quotatives, they quote as if

they were reproducing a real speech act but package it in a more expressive form, in sound and voice effects.

This suggests that speakers take advantage of the full creative possibilities the language offers them in the new quotatives: a stream-of-consciousness-like display of inner states and attitudes realized in vivid, immediate speech.

Be like and *go* have introduced this quotative style into the spoken language. It now fills a space within the spectrum of poetic formulae of the spoken register, where indirect free speech, commonly used in writing, is much less an option (Chafe 1994, Romaine and Lange 1991, Kleewitz and Couper-Kuhlen 1999) and where the theatrical topos of soliloquy did not take on (Ferrara and Bell 1995).

In contrast to *think*, *be like* and *go* theatricalize inner speech by outwardly displaying it as vivid, emotionally heightened output. And in contrast to *say*, they do not pin down a quote as to its hypotheticality level.

Looking at an ANOVA post-hoc test significance table yields the following results:

Table 3: ANOVA post-hoc

Significance:	like-go	like-say	like-think	go-say	go-think	say-think
	0.549	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001

F(df 5): 36.337, $p < 0.001$

This result ties in with Table 1, where an overall significance has been shown for the correlation of quotatives with mimesis (χ^2 (df3): 110.634, $p < 0.001$). In Table 3, the ANOVA statistic shows that the difference between *be like* and *go* as mimesis introductory items is not significant. A p-value well above 0.05 shows that their function with respect to mimetic enactment is not notably different. Both can be used to enquote sound, gestures, and voice effects. But note that the differences between *go* and *say/think* and between *be like* and *say/think* are highly significant (for all $p < 0.001$). Compared to *say* and *think*, *be like* and *go* have a significantly different correlation with mimesis. Table 1 shows that their correlation is higher (*go* 76%, *be like* 69%, *say* 42%, *think* 20%).

Thus, the newly grammaticalized quotatives *go* and *be like* are distinguished from the old quotatives *say* and *think* by their function as mimesis markers.

Be like and *go* are still newcomers within the quotative complex[9] and still stylistically marked as such (Underhill 1988, Butters 1980, 1982, Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). Pertaining to the immediacy of the spoken register and associated with youth speak, they have become associated with the expression of dramatically heightened narration (Romaine and Lange 1991, Ferrara and Bell 1995). They thus have become the prevalent items for the dramatic demonstration of emotionally salient events in sounds, voice, or gestural effects.

Following Güldemann (2001) and Yule and Mathis (1992), we can claim that in US English, where *say* and *think* foreground the semantics, the propositional content of the (inner) quote, *be like* and *go* highlight the 'how', the demonstrative-enacted side of the material.

5. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that *be like* and *go* are synchronically used as quotative items for mimetic performances in contrast to the older quotative devices, *say* and *think*. It gives two explanations as to why speakers choose to enquote such expressive speech events with *be like* and *go*.

1) Quotes containing mimetic enactment most frequently express attitude, evaluation, and point of view. These categories fall into the epistemic level I have termed hypothetical. As *be like* and *go* are uncommitted to the epistemic stance of the quote and do not pin down the speech event to its realization, they are the ideal introductory items for hypothetical quotes.

2) As newcomers to the pool of quotative introductory items, *be like* and *go* still have a stylistically marked status. Speakers choose them as focus quotatives, to introduce quotes with emotionally-heightened material rendered by mimetic enactment.

These findings show that, in US English, *be like* and *go* are not vacuous, parasitic items within a stable pool of quotative devices (cf. Buchstaller, 2001), but rather that they have taken on quite novel functions with respect to mimetic enactments. Speakers creatively exploit the additions to a previously inert paradigm and choose to use them for certain types of quotes. This underlines the claim that we indeed have to count *be like* and *go* as full members of the pool of possibilities of introducing reported speech and thought, where they do their fair share of work: introducing mimetic enactment and quotes with undetermined epistemic levels.

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

carriage return	intonation unit
[	overlap
=	quick, immediate connection of new turns or single units
(.)	micro-pause
::::	lengthening, according to its duration
( )	unintelligible passage, according to its duration
accent	primary or main accent
italics	voice or sound effects
‘ ’	signals for start and end of quote
@	laughter

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Notes

[1] Throughout this article, I will use the term 'new quotatives' for the newly grammaticalized verbs of quotatior *go* and *be like*. In this usage, I follow the literature which points out that those new quotatives - albeit new only in comparison to their much older colleagues - have taken on functions traditionally only served by a closed se of verbs such as *to say, to scream,* etc. Due to *be all*'s seeming confinement to California and (to a certain extent) New York English (Singler 2001), I will not include it here.

[2] These extremes are claimed to exist in their purest form in direct and indirect discourse, respectively. Bu Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen in their 1999 study showed that the borderline between direct and indirect discours has to be reconsidered. They falsify the age-old claim that the occurrence of mimesis is a defining criterion for quote to be direct. Given their results, mimesis can and does occur both in indirect, and direct quotes. In thi study, I will only be concerned with direct quotes, which I define via deictic criteria: a direct quote is a quot rendered from the point of view of the reportee in terms of temporal, spatial, and person orientation.

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